

Application No. 10/687,857  
Amendment dated January 11, 2005  
Reply to Office Action of December 3, 2004

### **Listing of Claims**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Claims 13-19 (canceled)

20. (currently amended) A skull clamp for rigidly holding the skull of the patient during surgery comprising:

a C-shaped frame to partially encircle the head of the patient, the frame having first and second ends adapted to be located on opposite sides of the skull of the patient;

a pin assembly located at a first end of the frame and oriented in alignment with an axis which, when in use, extends through the head of the patient and through the second leg of the C-shaped frame, said assembly holding a single skull pin and being adjustable relative to the first end of the frame to enable an operator to selectively determine the force applied to the skull of the patient by the corresponding single skull pin;

a rocker arm located at a second end of the frame, the first and second ends of the frame being aligned along an axis bisecting the skull of the patient and the rocker arm being rotatable relative to the axis; and

a pair of spaced skull pins mounted in a spaced relation on the rocker arm and adapted to engage and hold the skull of the patient opposite the single skull pin, said pair of spaced skull pins located at a second end of the frame; each of said pair of spaced skull pins operatively contacting an indicator, each of the indicators being movable in non-alignment with the axis and relative to the respective spaced skull pin in response to the engagement force applied by the skull of the patient to the respective spaced skull pin, thereby to provide an indication of the load distribution of the engagement forces on said pair of spaced skull pins.

Claim 21 (canceled)

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22. (currently amended) The skull clamp of claim ~~[[21]]~~ 20 wherein each of said pair of skull pins resides within a bore located at an end of the rocker arm, and further comprising:

a pair of pin carrier assemblies, each pin carrier assembly held within the bore and holding the respective indicator in operative contact with the respective skull pin.

23. (previously presented) The skull clamp of claim 22 wherein each of the two pin carrier assemblies further comprises:

a spring biasing the respective indicator in a desired position relative to the frame, so that the indicator moves relative to the frame in response to force on the skull pin only after the force of the spring is overcome.

24. (previously presented) The skull clamp of claim 23 wherein each indicator includes markings to facilitate visual detection of the movement of the indicator relative to the frame, thereby to facilitate comparison of the load distribution between said pair of spaced skull pins.

25. (previously presented) A skull fixation device comprising:

a frame adapted to partially encircle the skull of a patient, the frame having at least one leg which is adapted to be located adjacent the skull when the fixation device is in use, the at least one leg being aligned substantially perpendicular to an axis which extends through the skull; and

a pair of spaced skull pins mounted in spaced relation on a swivel bracket located at said at least one leg of the frame, the pair of spaced skull pins being spaced from the axis and adapted to engage and hold the skull of the patient, each of the pair of spaced skull pins operatively contacting a respective indicator, the indicators being spaced from the axis and movable relative to the swivel bracket in response to the force applied by the skull to the respective skull pin, thereby to indicate the load distribution of the forces on the spaced skull pins,

wherein the swivel bracket is rotatable about the axis to facilitate placement of the pair of spaced skull pins in desired positions relative to the skull, and the swivel bracket remains a fixed distance, along the axis, from said at least one leg of the frame.

26. (previously presented) The skull fixation device of claim 25 and further comprising another leg forming part of the frame, and a third pin mounted to said another leg and oriented along the axis.